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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000436

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RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO DHARAHAN; DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP;  
PARIS FOR ZEYA; LONDON FOR TSOU

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TAGS: KISL PREL SA SCUL

SUBJECT: MOSQUE SERMONS FOR SAUDI ARABIA JUNE 23: EASTERN PROVINCE IMAM WARNS OF 5TH COLUMN AND ENDORSES USE OF "KAFIR;" MECCAN ADVISES MUSLIMS TO BE GOD CONSCIOUS; MEDINA IMAM COUNSELS PATIENCE

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

FROM THE EASTERN PROVINCE: IMAM RAILS AGAINST TRAITORS WITHIN ISLAM

¶1. (C) On June 23, speaking at the Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal mosque in al-Khobar, Imam Mohammad al-Qahtani fulminated against a "Fifth Column within Islam." This is a subject he has preached on before. In his sermon, al-Qahtani attacked "secularists and hypocrites" who either wittingly or unwittingly, work with Islam's enemies to "redesign and tailor-make the Muslim faith to other people's standards." He went on to condemn Arab and Muslim states for "giving sanctuary to 'so-called' Muslims who claim that they have Islam's best interest at heart but act otherwise." He also criticized Muslim governments for "giving in to American and Western political and economic pressure."

¶2. (C) As an example of this submission, he cited American pressure in concert with "secularists and hypocrites to remove the word "kafir" from Islamic books, including the Holy Quran, and to replace it with the word 'others' simply to appease America and the Western World." Then the imam demanded of his audience "What else would 'they' ask for next?" Al-Qahtani concluded by voicing his displeasure with the activity of this "'Fifth Column,' (who) call themselves 'reformists' who are determined to reform the Muslim faith to fit their version of Islam." He also censured members of the Arab press for describing these people as "reformers," rather than the traitors they were. He concluded his injunction with the promise that "eternal hell and suffering would be the fate of all those who engaged in attempts to tamper with the faith." COMMENT: Al-Qahtani's assertion that any and all reform is not only hypocrisy but betrayal of the faith to the West would seem to preclude any prospect for a reasonable dialogue on reform. END COMMENT.

FROM MECCA: BY RECITING SURAH, MUSLIMS ACKNOWLEDGE ALLAH

¶3. (U) In the Friday sermon at the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Sheikh Saleh al-Talib spoke about the importance of the Surah al-Fatiha which Muslims incorporate into every obligatory or optional prayer. The imam stated that by reciting this surah (chapter of the Quran), the worshipper is telling God "You (Alone) we worship and You (Alone) we ask for help." By this avowal, the worshipper declares his submission to God.

JEWS ANGERED GOD; CHRISTIANS WENT ASTRAY

¶4. (U) An account of this sermon in the English-language "Saudi Gazette" reports that the imam concluded with the observation that when the worshipper recites this surah "he is asking God to guide him in "the Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your anger (such as the Jews), nor those who went astray (such as the Christians.)" COMMENT: It is not clear if the parenthetical statements reflect the words of the imam or the prejudices of the reporter. END COMMENT.

FROM MEDINA: IMAM DESCRIBES THE VIRTUES OF PATIENCE

¶5. (U) Shaykh Ali Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Hudhaifi preached on the virtues of patience to a congregation at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina (Note: The FBIS report names the preacher as Shaykh Husayn Ibn Abd al-Aziz Al-Shaykh. End note.). The imam described patience as the discipline that allows a person to do what "Allah has ordained and keep from doing what He has forbidden." He then identifies three kinds of patience.

¶6. (U) The greatest is the patience "to restrain oneself from sins, vice and all that Allah has forbidden." The imam observed that few have the patience to eschew that which Allah has forbidden. Consequently these people cannot be considered among the patient people ("Al-Sabireen") or attain the status of patient Mujahideen ("Al-Mujahideen al-Sabireen"), because it is great patience, piety, and fear of the Almighty, that restrains a person from following the dictates of his desires. Those who lack this form of

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patience will "be lured away by many worldly matters. He will be prone to commit sins as his will and determination will weaken considerably.... These people will face humiliation or imprisonment in this world and in the Hereafter the hellfire will be his abode."

¶7. (U) The second form of patience, the imam describes is "to be patient in obeying Allah and doing what he has ordained." Finally, the third form of patience is "forbearance in the face of tribulations and catastrophes. This kind of patience is not commendable unless a person believes that this tribulation or catastrophe is ordained by Allah."

Gfoeller